



County of San Diego

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TO: Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

FROM: Alfredo Aguirre, LCSW, Director *aa*
Behavioral Health Services

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (BHS) DIRECTOR'S REPORT – OCTOBER 2018

1. ACTION ITEM(S): NONE

2. *LIVE WELL SAN DIEGO* UPDATES / SPECIAL EVENTS

2.1 Upcoming Events

- October 13, 2018 - Community Alliance for Healthy Minds (CAHM) Forum
The CAHM Forum, *From Hopelessness to Hope and Healing*, is scheduled for October 13, 2018, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The forum will again be held at California State University, San Marcos and includes a film screening of *Resilience: The Biology of Stress & the Science of Hope* along with a panel discussion. The forum will also feature workshops and a resource fair. More information, including registration, is available at www.cahmsd.org.
- October 24, 2018 - Meeting of the Minds
The 21st annual behavioral health conference and resource fair is being held on October 24, 2018 at Marina Village, San Diego. The conference highlights innovative and unique topics in mental health prevention, treatment and supportive care and fosters collaboration, cooperation and understanding related to mental health.

For more information or to register, please visit the Mental Health America website, <http://mhasd.org/events/>.

3. UPDATES FROM ADULT/OLDER ADULT SYSTEM OF CARE (AOA)

This month, the BHS Adult/Older Adult System of Care is pleased to share the following success stories from contracted providers in their own words and the words of their clients.

3.1 Union of Pan Asian Communities (UPAC), New Leaf Recovery Center

- A Client came into program with her boyfriend requesting couple's therapy. They had been experiencing domestic violence and poor communication skills. After working with them for about a month, they have been practicing their skills and increasing positive activities with one another. This most recent session I had with them, they sat together on the couch and said, "I don't know what to talk about, we haven't really been arguing because we have been practicing our communication and doing fun things with one another." Through group therapy, individual therapy and comprehensive services, the client and her significant other were able to work through their issues and now choose communication over violence in conflict resolution.
- A 43-year old female client used the love of her dog to get sober. She decided to get clean after she heard a counselor tell the group members that they'll be referred to detox if they couldn't get clean on their own. She decided to take it seriously because she thought to herself: "I can't go to detox. What about my dog?" Today, she shared that she is grateful for "my new-found hope and excitement for my future" because she can't believe what she's accomplished so far and is excited for the future ahead of her. She never thought she could do what she is doing now. She came in February 2018 and is expected to graduate in September 2018.
- A repeat client who would consistently drink alcohol and have anger outbursts in group including yelling and arguing with staff eventually stopped coming to the program and was later discharged. A couple of months ago, he re-enrolled in the program and has made significant progress. His mood has been much more stable, he is no longer having anger outbursts in group and informed us he feels like he can manage his mood and anger much better than before. He reports he is feeling better. He can now experience the benefits of being sober and would like to maintain it. He has gained insight into how his substance use affects his mental health symptoms as well, stating: "when I'm drunk, I can't manage my anger."

3.2 Second Chance, Adult Re-Entry Court

The participant sharing his story below came to the Re-Entry Court Program as a referral. All of our participants, when they come to the program as referrals, are in-custody due to new arrests or a violation of probation. The participant below, at the time of referral, was in custody for sales of a controlled substance. Previously, he had been involved in the criminal justice system since 14 years of age and had completed three prison terms and one local jail sentence for crimes committed to fuel his drug addiction. He began using methamphetamine at 14 years of age and identifies how his substance use took him away from himself and his values as well as contributed to the choices he made to commit crimes. The participant below started the Re-Entry Court Program and believes that the intensive, long-term treatment provided through the program, along with the focus on co-occurring disorders, was what he needed to support the commitment and personal growth that he shares in his success story below:

"My life isn't much different from other people that you might encounter while working with justice impacted individuals of San Diego. Some of the issues that I tackled in the last 18 months range in definition but have affected me in one form or another. These include; abandonment, anxiety, depression, passive aggressiveness, and low self-esteem. All of these come from a childhood of traumatic events. It goes without mentioning that some of my problems were self-induced due to me not having developed emotionally, mentally, and physically enough to deal with life as I lived it. My life was dictated by things that had happened in the past. By confronting these I believe that my life has been slowly gaining momentum in a positive way. I've only come as far as I have because of the help I received from people, organizations, programs, and the law enforcement officers who invested their trust in me.

It's because of my willingness to grow and seek help that I've been able to achieve some of my short and long term goals. Today, I am very involved in the lives of the members of my family. The days that I've been clean from active drug use is over five hundred. I am a second year student at San Diego City College (SDCC), majoring in Political Science on route to a University of California institution where I will do research on public policy as it pertains to marginalized communities, specifically those that have been incarcerated. My goal is to get accepted to UC Berkeley for the Fall 2019.

I have achieved three major accomplishments while I've been a student at SDCC. All of these I did as an advocate for justice impacted students on campus. The first is that I am a member of Urban Scholars Union, an organization that advocates for a safe transition from incarceration/treatment to a place of higher learning. It's through the sharing of our personal narratives and leadership development that we have been able to expand to other campuses in the San Diego region. We are focused on the upward mobility of individuals who have every right to pursue a college education post incarceration.

Another milestone for me is the current job I have as a Peer Advocate for the City Scholars program at SDCC. Aside from helping develop the program, my position entails hands on advocacy for students that are new to a community college. I assist with the first six steps of registration and enrollment. As their advocate I follow up with these students monthly making sure they are utilizing all the resources the campus has to offer them. The students I am honored to work with come from the same places of treatment and incarceration as I did.

Like I mentioned in my introduction, my life isn't much different from those that have fallen to addiction and recidivism. Everyone can do what I have done and no one is exempt from failure. On the flip side, we all deserve an opportunity to make things right. Each and every one of us is entitled to live to their full potential possible. It just so happens that I finally decided to strive in my mine. Everything I achieved has only been possible through my willingness to seek help and trust that programs like San Diego County Re-Entry Court, were there to help. With the collaboration of resources provided by Second Chance and University of California, San Diego, Department of Psychiatry, I have been able to grow into the human being that I am today."

3.3 MHS, Inc., Employment Solutions

The program has been working with a 37-year old female diagnosed with depression. She was enrolled last year but had to stop participation for some time due to health concerns. She reactivated her case and expressed a clear dedication to becoming a Peer Support Specialist. She had taken courses and was active with a clubhouse in her area. The client and Employment Solutions worked on identifying her employment skills, including her lived experience, compassion for others, and past experience in clinical settings. The client and Employment Solutions also worked on building interview skills and discussed how to utilize natural supports for employment connections. The client faced some significant barriers including depressive symptoms which caused her to struggle with getting out of bed on some days. She signed up for Peer Employment Training (PET) and worked with Employment Solutions on applying for positions in the mental health field while waiting for training to begin.

This client successfully completed the PET courses and made important social connections while in this course. One of her classmates suggested that the client apply for a part time Peer Support Specialist position with UPAC. She interviewed and was hired shortly after. Because the program is new to UPAC, she has been able to work with her manager to tailor her job duties to suit her strengths. The client has been working there and building confidence in her ability to guide others through their recovery. She is now holding advocacy courses for others who struggle with mental health disabilities. As she obtained certification and practiced communication with employers, the client's confidence grew and her "down" days became less frequent. The client is also pursuing a part-time position with Amazon in order fulfillment and expressed confidence that she can successfully work at both positions.

Respectfully submitted,



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AA/bp

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